

We Claim:

1. In a network, a method for managing the delivery of restaurant related services from
5 a plurality of unaffiliated restaurants, comprising the steps of:

storing at least one customer record at a location accessible over said network,
said customer record including a customer identifier and at least one of dietary
restriction information, billing information and customer location information;

- 10 storing a plurality of menu item records at a location accessible over the
network, said menu items associated with a particular restaurant and available for
purchase over said network;

enabling access to a presentation of said menu items over said network to a
customer, said customer being associated with at least one of said stored customer
records; and

- 15 providing an inventory of ingredients needed to make said menu items, said
inventory stored at a location accessible over said network.

2. The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of:

20 accepting menu selections from said customer, said selection using said customer
record.

3. The method of claim 2, comprising the further steps of:

providing a delivery service for more than one of said plurality of restaurants,
said delivery service accessing delivery information over said network prior to
25 delivering the selected menu items to the ordering customer.

4. The method of claim 3, comprising the further step of:

providing updated delivery status information from the delivery service over said
network to the ordering customer.

5. The method of claim 2, comprising the further steps of:

providing updated information regarding the preparation status of said selected menu items to the ordering customer over said network.

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6. The method of claim 5, comprising the further steps of:

providing said updated preparation status information to said delivery service over said network.

10 7. The method of claim 2, comprising the further step of:

programmatically updating the inventory of ingredients to reflect the items used in the preparation of said selected menu items.

8. The method of claim 7, comprising the further step of:

15 storing records of at least one vendor available to sell ingredients used in said selected menu items.

9. The method of claim 8, comprising the further step of:

20 programmatically placing an order from said at least one of said vendor in response to a diminished level of a menu item ingredient.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said menu items are associated with preparation options chosen by authorized individuals at the restaurant associated with said menu items.

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11. The method of claim 10 wherein said preparation options include at least one of cooking time options and additional ingredient options.

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12. The method of claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

providing at a location accessible to at least one of said plurality of restaurants, a shadow electronic device, said shadow electronic device storing current copies of said customer records, plurality of menu item records associated with said at least one of said plurality of restaurants, the inventory of ingredients and said menu selections; and
5 using said shadow electronic device to deliver restaurant services to customers of said at least one restaurant in the event of a disruption in said network.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein access to the presentation of said menu items is
10 limited based upon the location of the customer.

14. In a network, a restaurant services delivery system, comprising:

a plurality of restaurants not associated with each other, said restaurants connected to the network and producing electronic versions of menu items available for
15 purchase from said restaurant; and
an electronic device interfaced with said network, said electronic device having access to at least one storage location on said network holding at least one customer record, said customer record including a customer identifier, billing information and at least one of dietary restriction information and customer location information, and a
20 plurality of said electronic versions of menu items, said electronic device enabling access to a customer associated with a customer record, said customer selecting and purchasing at least one of said menu items using said billing information.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein said electronic device also has access to a location
25 holding an inventory of ingredients needed to make said menu items available from one of said restaurants, said inventory being programmatically updated to reflect ingredients used in preparing said customer selections.

16. The system of claim 14, further comprising:

30 a delivery service, said delivery service having access to said network and delivering orders for customers of said restaurants.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein said delivery service uses said customer location information to deliver the customer selections.

18. The system of claim 14 wherein said electronic version of said menu items includes
5 dietary information.

19. The system of claim 14 wherein said dietary restriction information is cross-referenced with said customer selection and a warning displayed to said customer regarding ingredients from said dietary restriction information that are present in said
10 customer selection.

20. In a network, a medium holding computer-executable steps for a method for managing the delivery of restaurant related services from a plurality of unaffiliated restaurants, said method comprising the steps of:

15 storing at least one customer record at a location accessible over said network, said customer record including a customer identifier and at least one of dietary restriction information, billing information and customer location information;

storing a plurality of menu item records at a location accessible over the network, said menu items associated with a particular restaurant and available for
20 purchase over said network;

enabling access to a presentation of said menu items over said network to a customer, said customer being associated with at least one of said stored customer records; and

25 providing an inventory of ingredients needed to make said menu items, said inventory stored at a location accessible over said network.

21. The medium of claim 20, wherein said method comprises the further step of:

accepting menu selections from said customer, said selection using said customer record.

22. The medium of claim 21, wherein said method comprises the further step of:
providing a delivery service for more than one of said plurality of restaurants,
said delivery service accessing delivery information over said network prior to
delivering the selected menu items to the ordering customer.
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23. The medium of claim 22, wherein said method comprises the further step of:
providing updated delivery status information from the delivery service over said
network to the ordering customer.
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24. The medium of claim 21 wherein said method comprises the further step of:
providing updated information regarding the preparation status of said selected
menu items to the ordering customer over said network.
25. The medium of claim 24 wherein said method comprises the further step of:
15 providing said updated preparation status information to said delivery service
over said network.
26. The medium of claim 21 wherein said method comprises the further step of:
programmatically updating the inventory of ingredients to reflect the items used
20 in the preparation of said selected menu items.
27. The medium of claim 26 wherein said method comprises the further step of:
storing records of at least one vendor available to sell ingredients used in said
selected menu items.
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28. The medium of claim 27 wherein said method comprises the further step of:
programmatically placing an order from said at least one of said vendor in
response to a diminished level of a menu item ingredient.
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29. The medium of claim 20 wherein said menu items are associated with preparation
options chosen by authorized individuals at the restaurant associated with said menu
items.

30. The medium of claim 29 wherein said preparation options include at least one of cooking time options and additional ingredient options.

5 31. The medium of claim 20, wherein said method comprises the further steps of:

providing at a location accessible to at least one of said plurality of restaurants, a shadow electronic device, said shadow electronic device storing current copies of said customer records, plurality of menu item records associated with said at least one of said plurality of restaurants, the inventory of ingredients and said menu selections; and

10 using said shadow electronic device to deliver restaurant services to customers of said at least one restaurant in the event of a disruption in said network.

32. In a network, a method for managing the delivery of restaurant related services from a plurality of restaurants, comprising the steps of:

15 storing at least one customer record at a location accessible over said network, said customer record including a customer identifier and at least one of dietary restriction information, billing information and customer location information;

storing a plurality of menu item records at a location accessible over the network, said menu items associated with a particular restaurant and available for
20 purchase over said network;

enabling access to a presentation of said menu items over said network to a customer, said customer being associated with at least one of said stored customer records; and

25 providing an inventory of ingredients needed to make said menu items, said inventory stored at a location accessible over said network.

33. The method of claim 32, comprising the further step of:

accepting menu selections from said customer, said selection using said customer record.

34. The method of claim 33, comprising the further steps of:

providing a delivery service for more than one of said plurality of restaurants, said delivery service accessing delivery information over said network prior to delivering the selected menu items to the ordering customer.

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35. The method of claim 34, comprising the further step of:

providing updated delivery status information from the delivery service over said network to the ordering customer.

10 36. The method of claim 33, comprising the further steps of:

providing updated information regarding the preparation status of said selected menu items to the ordering customer over said network.

37. The method of claim 36, comprising the further steps of:

15 providing said updated preparation status information to said delivery service over said network.

38. The method of claim 33, comprising the further step of:

20 programmatically updating the inventory of ingredients to reflect the items used in the preparation of said selected menu items.

39. The method of claim 38, comprising the further step of:

25 storing records of at least one vendor available to sell ingredients used in said selected menu items.

40. The method of claim 39, comprising the further step of:

programmatically placing an order from said at least one of said vendor in response to a diminished level of a menu item ingredient.

30 41. The method of claim 32 wherein said menu items are associated with preparation options chosen by authorized individuals at the restaurant associated with said menu items.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein said preparation options include at least one of cooking time options and additional ingredient options.

5 43. The method of claim 32, comprising the further steps of:

providing at a location accessible to at least one of said plurality of restaurants, a shadow electronic device, said shadow electronic device storing current copies of said customer records, plurality of menu item records associated with said at least one of said plurality of restaurants, the inventory of ingredients and said menu selections; and

10 using said shadow electronic device to deliver restaurant services to customers of said at least one restaurant in the event of a disruption in said network.

44. The method of claim 32 wherein access to the presentation of said menu items is limited based upon the location of the customer.

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